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### **NURSING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**

#### **Background:**

Board staff is receiving many applications from programs that are part of a national private career education schools. Assessing whether proposals meet rule requirements for nursing program administrator is problematic due to layers of corporate and local oversight. Additionally we have had unusual requests regarding the nursing program administrator function for existing programs in Arizona. This document is provided to clarify enforcement of existing rules. All rules relating to nursing program administrator are detailed below.

#### **Rules:**

##### **R4-19-201. Organization and Administration**

- A. The parent institution of a nursing program shall be accredited as a post-secondary institution, college, or university, by an accrediting body that is recognized as an accrediting body by the U.S. Department of Education, and shall hold Arizona private post-secondary approval status if applicable. The parent institution shall submit evidence to the board of continuing accreditation after each reaccreditation review or action. If the parent institution holds both secondary and post-secondary accreditation, it shall operate any RN or PN program under its post-secondary accreditation.
- D. The parent institution shall center the administrative control of the nursing program in the nursing program administrator and shall provide the support and resources necessary to meet the requirements of R4-19-203 and R4-19-204
- H. The parent institution shall appoint a sole individual to the full-time position of nursing program administrator. The parent institution shall ensure that the individual appointed meets or exceeds the requirements of, and fulfills the duties specified in, R4-19-203, whether on an interim or permanent basis.
- J. The parent institution shall provide adequate fiscal, human, physical, and learning resources to support program processes and outcomes necessary for compliance with this Article.
- K. The parent institution shall provide adequate resources to recruit, employ, and retain sufficient numbers of qualified faculty members to meet program and student learning outcomes and the requirements of this Article.
- L. The parent institution shall notify the Board of a vacancy, pending vacancy, or leave of absence greater than 30 days in the position of nursing program administrator within 15 days of the program's awareness of the vacancy, pending vacancy, or leave of absence and do the following:

1. Appoint an interim or permanent administrator who meets the requirements of R4-19-203(A) within 15 days of the effective date of the vacancy or absence, and
  2. Notify the Board of the appointment of an interim or permanent administrator within 15 days of appointment and provide a copy of the administrator's credentials to the Board.
- M.** A parent institution shall notify the Board within 15 days of any change or pending change in institutional accreditation status or reporting requirements.

**R4-19-202. Resources, Facilities, Services, and Records**

- A.** The parent institution of a nursing program shall consider the size of the program including number of program faculty and number of program students and shall provide and maintain resources, services and facilities for the effective development and implementation of the program that are at a minimum:
1. Equivalent to those provided by approved programs of equivalent size and type, or in the case of no equivalent program, scaled relative to an approved program;
  2. Comparable to those provided to other academic units of the parent institution; and
  3. Include the following:
    - a. A private office for the nursing program administrator;
    - b. Faculty offices that are conveniently located to program classrooms and secretarial support staff;
    - c. If faculty offices are not private, the parent institution shall provide dedicated space for private faculty-student conferences that is:
      - i. Conveniently located to faculty offices, and
      - ii. Available whenever confidential student information is discussed.
    - d. Space for secretarial support and a secure area for records and files, convenient to the nursing program faculty and administrator;
    - e. Classrooms, laboratories, and conference rooms of the size and type needed with furnishings and equipment consistent with the educational purposes for which the facilities are used;
    - f. Acoustics, lighting, ventilation, plumbing, heating and cooling in working order;
    - g. Dedicated secretarial, laboratory and other support personnel available to meet the needs of the program.
    - h. Access to a comprehensive, current, and relevant collection of educational materials and learning resources for faculty members and students.
      - i. Access to supplies and equipment to simulate patient care that are:
        - i. In working order,
        - ii. Organized in a manner so that they are readily available to faculty,
        - iii. Consistent with current clinical practices, and
        - iv. Of sufficient quantity for the number of students enrolled,
    - j. Current technology in working order to support teaching and learning. Institutions offering web-enhanced and distance education shall provide ongoing and effective technical, design and production support for faculty members and technical support services for students.

**R4-19-203. Administrator; Qualifications and Duties**

- A.** The nursing program administrator shall hold a current Arizona registered nurse license in good standing or multi-state privilege to practice in Arizona under A.R.S., Title 32, Chapter 15 and:
1. For registered nursing programs:
    - a. A graduate degree with a major in nursing;
    - b. A minimum of three years work experience as a registered nurse providing direct patient care; and
    - c. If appointed to the position of nursing program administrator on or after the effective date of these rules, have a minimum of one academic year full-time experience teaching in or administering a nursing education program leading to licensure; or
    - d. If lacking the requirements of subsection (A)(1)(c), the parent institution may appoint an individual to the position of “Interim Program Administrator” under the following conditions:
      - i. The individual is subject to termination based on performance and any factors determined by the institution;
      - ii. A direct supervisor evaluates performance periodically over the next 12 months to ensure institutional and program goals are being addressed; and
      - iii. If evaluations are satisfactory, the individual may be appointed to permanent status after 12 months in the interim position.
  2. For practical nursing programs:
    - a. If appointed prior to the effective date of these rules, a baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing; and
    - b. If appointed on or after the effective date of these rules, the requirements of subsection (A) (1).
- B.** The administrator shall have comparable status with other program administrators in the parent institution and shall report directly to an academic officer of the institution.
- C.** The administrator shall have the authority to direct the program in all its phases, including:
1. Administering the nursing education program;
  2. Directing activities related to academic policies, personnel policies, curriculum, resources, facilities, services, and program evaluation;
  3. Preparing and administering the budget;
  4. Recommending candidates for faculty appointment, retention, and promotion;
  5. In addition to any other evaluation used by the parent institution, ensuring that nursing program faculty members are evaluated at a minimum:
    - a. Annually in the first year of employment and every three years thereafter;\_
    - b. Upon receipt of information that a faculty member, in conjunction with performance of their duties, may be engaged in intentional, negligent or other behavior that either is or might be:
      - i. Below the standards of the program or the parent institution,
      - ii. Inconsistent with nursing professional standards, or
      - iii. Potentially or actually harmful to a patient.
    - c. By the nurse administrator or a nurse educator designated by the nurse administrator, and

- d. In the areas of teaching ability and application of nursing knowledge and skills relative to the teaching assignment.
- 6. Together with faculty develop, enforce and evaluate equivalent student and faculty policies necessary for safe patient care and to meet clinical agency requirements regarding:
  - a. Physical and mental health,
  - b. Criminal background checks,
  - c. Substance use screens,
  - d. Functional abilities, and
  - e. Supervision of clinical activities.
- 7. Participating in activities that contribute to the governance of the parent institution;
- 8. Together with faculty develop, enforce and evaluate both student and faculty policies regarding minimal requisite nursing skills and knowledge necessary to provide safe patient care for the type of unit and patient assignment; and
- 9. Enforcing consistent application of all nursing program policies.
- D.** The administrator of the nursing program shall not carry a teaching load of more than three clock hours per week if required to teach.
- E.** The administrator may have administrative responsibilities other than the nursing program, provided that a nursing program faculty member is designated to assist with program management and the administrator is able to fulfill the duties of this Article.

**R4-19-204. Faculty; Personnel Policies; Qualifications and Duties**

- D.** The faculty shall supervise all students in clinical areas in accordance with the acuity of the patient population, clinical objectives, demonstrated competencies of the student, and requirements established by the clinical agency.
- G.** Under the leadership of the nursing program administrator, nursing program faculty members shall:
  - 1. Develop, implement, evaluate, and revise the program of learning including the curriculum and learning outcomes of the program;
  - 2. Develop, implement, evaluate and revise standards for the admission, progression, and graduation of students.
  - 3. Participate in advisement and guidance of students;
- H.** Together with the nursing program administrator, develop, implement and evaluate written policies for faculty orientation, continuous learning and evaluation.

**Examples of Issues:**

A national chain of career colleges appoints a corporate nursing director to develop nursing program curriculum and policies and to oversee all nursing programs across multiple campuses in multiple states. The local campus is independently accredited. The national chain hires and identifies a local campus nursing administrator as administrator of the nursing program in their application. The organizational chart reveals that the local site administrator of the nursing program is reporting directly to a campus director but also is reporting to the corporate director of nursing. Policies reveal that most administrative aspects of the program are determined by a corporate nursing director.

*Current interpretation: The program is advised that whoever they appoint as*

*administrator must have administrative control over the program and the ability to modify curriculum, admission standards etc. There can be a relationship with the corporate nursing director for advice or consultation. Additionally the parent institution can set policies for curriculum change such as advisory committees and peer review as commonly occurs in most program, but the administrator is the person responsible for the program and must have a mechanism to institute and effect change to meet the unique needs of the particular program in AZ.*

1. The administrator of a school with a small program calls and asks if the nursing program administrator can be part time.  
*Rules were amended effective 7/6/2013 to prohibit a part-time nursing program administrator.*
2. A rural program requires the nursing program administrator to teach 45 hours during the school year however a site visit revealed that the administrator was teaching over 45 hours and was also administering the CNA program and did not have sufficient time or assistance to tend to her administrative duties. She wanted to use her “own time” on weekends to teach for the program.  
*Current interpretation: This is not permitted. Rules effective 7/6/13 also require that the administrator have assistance from a qualified faculty member when administering multiple programs.*
3. A nursing program, upon the resignation of the nursing program administrator, appoints 2 faculty members to perform administrative duties while maintaining their teaching loads.  
*Current interpretation: Programs can have only one administrator and that administrator must meet all requirements and work in a full-time position. An interim administrator’s job description and qualifications must meet the rule requirements for nursing program administrators including limited teaching.*
4. Another variant of the above: a program reorganizes the nursing department and leaves the current administrator in place, however promotes another nursing faculty to oversee him/her and approve all program decisions—this is not an academic officer of the institution. The program identifies the current administrator as the program administrator.  
*Current interpretation: This does not meet rule requirements as the administrator must answer to an academic officer of the institution and have authority over all aspects of the program.*
5. A large program has an overall program administrator and several site coordinators. Do the current rules prevent the site coordinators from teaching more than 45 hours in one academic session?  
*Current interpretation: No, rule only applies to designated administrator for the total program.*